



LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



**Little Rock Central High School
National Historic Site**

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July, 2004

prepared by

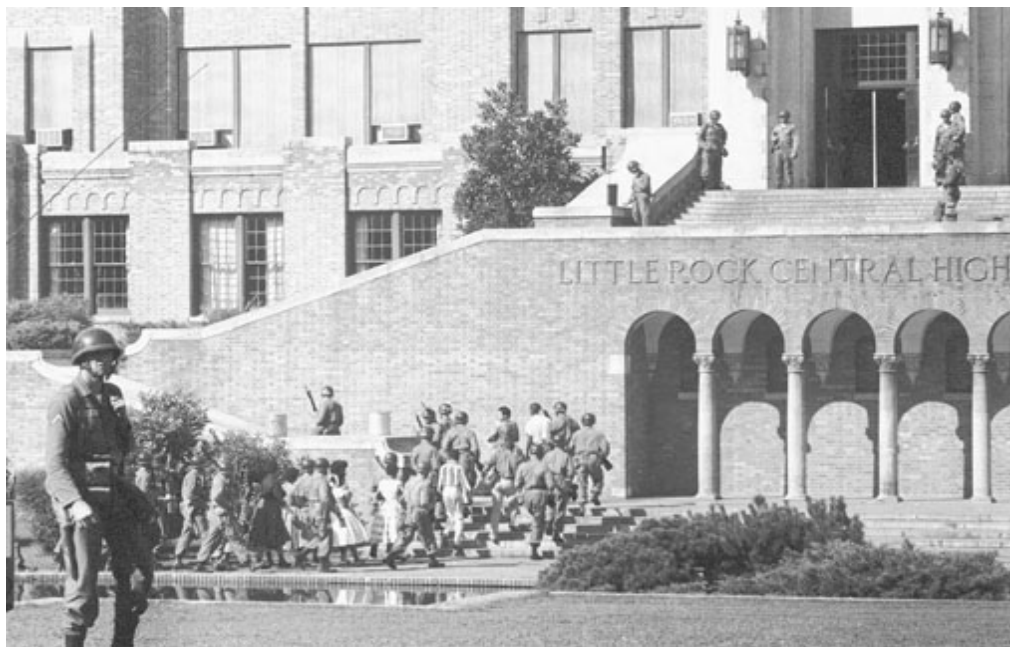
**Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**Little Rock Central High School
National Historic Site**

**Harpers Ferry Center
Interpretive Planning**

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Central High School, 1957



Ruby Bridges Day Workshop at Central High School, 2004

Executive Summary

This long-range interpretive plan provides foundation, existing conditions, and recommendations for facilities, media, and services to support interpretation, education, and visitor experiences at Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site (NHS).

Significant recommendations include:

A new visitor center will be located at the northeast corner of South Park Street and Daisy L. Bates Drive. Visitor center functions will include orientation, interpretation, education, visitor services, and administration. Characteristics and desired outcomes of interpretive and educational media and programmatic areas are described.

The current visitor center (Magnolia Mobil Service Station) will become an education center, providing a venue for curriculum-based educational programs for school groups.

Little Rock Central High School remains a functioning school, a national historic landmark, and a vital partner with the NHS. Interpretation and visitor experience of the school will include guided tours of the school, visitor access to school grounds, and outdoor interpretation via wayside exhibits, guided walks, and publications.

The historic streetscape will be preserved in partnership with property owners, and will be interpreted by wayside exhibits, guided walks, and publications.

Interpretation of and visitor access to related sites around the city of Little Rock will be worked out with partners.

Partnerships will continue to be a major priority, necessary to accomplish park purpose and goals.

A separate Education Plan has been prepared. It will join this long-range interpretive plan, an annual implementation plan, and an interpretive database to constitute a Comprehensive Interpretation and Education Plan (CIEP).

Introduction

Work on this Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) began in January, 2002 after the completion of the General Management Plan (GMP). Workshops were held in January and March, 2002. Participants included park and regional office staff, members of the Little Rock Nine, former Central High School students, area residents, representatives of other agencies and organizations, subject matter experts, and staff from Harpers Ferry Center.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP):

- Describes foundation goals and issues for visitor experience, interpretation, education, and resource stewardship
- Provides relevant background information
- Recommends ways to achieve those goals and address the issues through facilities, interpretive media and programs, and access to resources and experiences

This plan spans the next 7 to 10 years. It will join an Education Plan, an Annual Interpretive Plan (AIP) and an Interpretive Database to make up a Comprehensive Interpretive and Education Plan (CIEP) for Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. Intended audiences for this LRIP include park staff, interpretive media and facility designers, partners, and regional office staff.

This plan is congruent with other park plans, including the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site (CHSC) General Management Plan and the CHSC Strategic Plan.

FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING

Park Purpose

The reason the site was established provides the most fundamental criteria against which the appropriateness of actions proposed in the draft alternatives are tested. The following purpose statement represents the team's interpretation of the legislative mandate that established the site. The enabling legislation states that the site was set aside to:

Preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit, education, and inspiration of present and future generations, Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and to interpret its role in the integration of public schools and the development of the Civil Rights movement in the United States.

Park Significance

Significance statements define important attributes that relate to the site's purpose and why the site was established. Significance statements capture the essence of the site's importance to the nation's natural and cultural heritage. Understanding the site's significance helps managers set protection priorities and determine desirable visitor experiences.

Based on the legislation, the following significance statements were developed.

The admission of nine African-American students to Little Rock Central High School was the most prominent national example of the implementation of the two Supreme Court decisions in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

Central High School was designated a national historic landmark in recognition of the events which took place at the school during the Little Rock crises, beginning in 1957, and continuing through the closing and reopening of the school in 1959.

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Little Rock Central High School played a significant role in the desegregation of public schools in the South.

Management Goals

Management goals have been determined to be the most important goals for the site. They stem from the purpose and significance statements. Given the purpose and significance, goals were developed to provide guidance in preserving and protecting what is significant and communicating the primary themes to the visitors. These are immediate and long-term goals – the actions that would take place during the life of this plan (10–15 years) to fulfill resource protection, visitor use, and operational mandates. The goals are:

Interpretation: The story of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, as portrayed through interpretive themes, will be effectively interpreted for diverse audiences in ways that engage attention and emotion, provoke thought and reflection, and relate to contemporary issues. Educational services incorporate park themes and school curricula and serve both on-site and off-site audiences, and they are based on active partnerships with educational institutions. Historical interpretation and education are based on accurate and contemporary scholarship, and they represent legitimate differences in perspective. Electronic, print, and digital media extend outreach services to the public locally, nationally, and internationally.

Orientation: A well-defined point (or points) of arrival, welcome, and site orientation will be available for site visitors. Visitors' choices, including onsite and offsite opportunities and related sites, will be well defined. Visitors feel welcome at all publicly accessible areas and can clearly distinguish between public and private areas. Onsite visitors can get a clear picture of the appearance and ambience of the site during 1957–58.

Cultural Landscape: The integrity and ambience of Central High School's adjacent historic streetscape, and the surrounding national historic district neighborhood, would be protected to the extent possible to preserve the historic scene in which the dramatic events of 1957–58 occurred. The NPS, within the limits of the site's enabling legislation, would continue to work with the school board and district to achieve this goal. Resource

preservation reflects the historic context within which those events unfolded, providing an effective backdrop in scale for interpretation of this landmark battle in the struggle for civil rights.

Partnerships: The site will encourage and use a variety of partnerships to fulfill its mission. These partners will be involved with site management, resource protection, interpretation, education, and visitor experience. One potential partner is the current students of Central High School. Partnerships with students would have to be coordinated through the school or the school district.

Civil Rights: Visitors to the site will be able to make personal connections to the meaning of the integrated school since the 1957–58 events. People are encouraged to contemplate and participate in the improvement of race relations.

Visitor Experience Goals

The following are experiences (including knowledge, attitudes, activities, and sensory experiences) that the NPS and its partners want to make available for site visitors. These goals will influence park operations and guide the development of interpretive and educational media and programs.

Visitors will have opportunities to:

- learn about and feel the emotions of the events surrounding the integration of Central High and be able to relate those events to the overall civil rights movement, to current events, and to themselves;
- meet (through audiovisual and other media) the people involved (e.g., Little Rock Nine, white students, school administrators, soldiers, and others), feel their emotions, and have access to their stories;
- put locations and events in context by walking or viewing the school grounds, South Park Street, and the streets of the surrounding neighborhood; and, if they choose, visiting related sites;

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- learn about the Constitution and the legal issues involved in its interpretation and application;
- learn about other sites and stories associated with civil rights;
- have access to related contemporary stories, such as events at the high school and in Little Rock today, how the students and residents feel about past and present events, and the current racial situation;
- gain an appreciation for the high school's size, history, ambiance, and architectural significance; and,
- better understand race relations of the past and present, and be encouraged to think about race relations in the future.

Interpretive Themes

Interpretation is an educational activity that is designed to provoke thought and curiosity, convey messages, encourage emotional connections, and help people enjoy, appreciate, and protect park resources and values. Interpretive planning includes determining what are the key interpretive opportunities, stories, concepts, and experiences associated with a park site, and recommending the best ways to communicate those opportunities and stories and provide those experiences. Interpretive themes are those key interpretive opportunities, stories, and concepts that are important for visitors to understand. They provide the foundation for interpretive programs and media (although they need not include everything that is interpreted in the park). Six primary interpretive themes were developed for the National Historic Site. They are described below, along with stories suggested by planning workshop participants, who shared their considerable experience with the events and stories associated with the park.

A) The Event

The integration of Central High was a landmark battle in the struggle for civil rights. It forced the people of a city and a nation to confront themselves on the issue of discrimination, created an international problem for the country by exposing racism in American society, pitted federal upholding of constitutional civil

rights against states rights of self-governance, and provided a foundation for supporting and forging new attitudes of racial tolerance.

A related topic is the 44 teachers that were fired for supporting and assisting the Little Rock Nine. And the role of the Women's Emergency Committee – in fact things were so bad here that the membership list for the Women's Emergency Committee was not released for forty years. There was a strong fear of possible retribution.

-- workshop participant

B) Civil Rights Movement

The 1957-58 events at Central High School constituted one of many battles in the ongoing struggle for equal rights for all. The integration of Central High School was the first prominent implementation of the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court. Subsequent events have demonstrated that racial discrimination would not be obliterated quickly or easily.

It will also be important to focus on the role of the media – how it's influenced history and perceptions. What people do when the camera is trained on you and how people sometimes act differently.

-- workshop participant

C) Use of Executive Power

President Eisenhower's issuance of Executive Order 10730, which provided "Assistance for the Removal of an Obstruction of Justice within the state of Arkansas," represented a national commitment to enforce civil rights. It was one of the few times

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that a president has exercised his right to use executive power to contravene state authority on behalf of civil rights for African-Americans.

We need to explore the different spheres of influence. Executive power versus states' rights. Including: (1) What were the arguments? (2) How did they relate to the constitution? (3) How did they relate to the individuals involved?

-- workshop participant

D) Equal Rights

In the Declaration of Independence, the United States proclaimed as its founding philosophy a commitment to certain “self evident truths,” including the assertion that “all men are created equal.” Almost 200 years later, and after several Constitutional amendments that strengthened and clarified that commitment, events at Little Rock Central High would put it to a monumental test.

We need to remember that some groups were excluded by the constitution. We can't mislead young kids. They're sometimes horrified that this occurred – they never knew before.

-- workshop participant

E) The School

Central High is more than a building. It is a symbol of excellence in education, an architectural achievement, the end of a segregated school system, and humanity at its best and worst.

Central High was one of the top 38 schools in the country in '58. It is my impression that excellence in teaching brought it to that level in '58. It went down later, and then came back up to that standard today.

-- workshop participant

F) The City and the State

As the relatively progressive capital of a southern state – with several integrated institutions including the library, public buses, parks, and the University of Arkansas law and medical schools – Little Rock seemed an unlikely site for civil unrest over the issue of school integration. However, a series of events in the state exposed significant white opposition to desegregation and created an explosive situation.

Actually Little Rock was relatively “progressive”. They actually had schools for blacks. City officials took great pride in the fact they had built Dunbar for blacks – that they had excellence in education for a segregated school system. We also need to remember that “progressive” is a loaded term – it’s very slippery – we need to be careful here.

-- workshop participant

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National Guard troops across Park St. from Central High School, 1957



Students being escorted into the school, 1957



Central High School pep rally, 2003

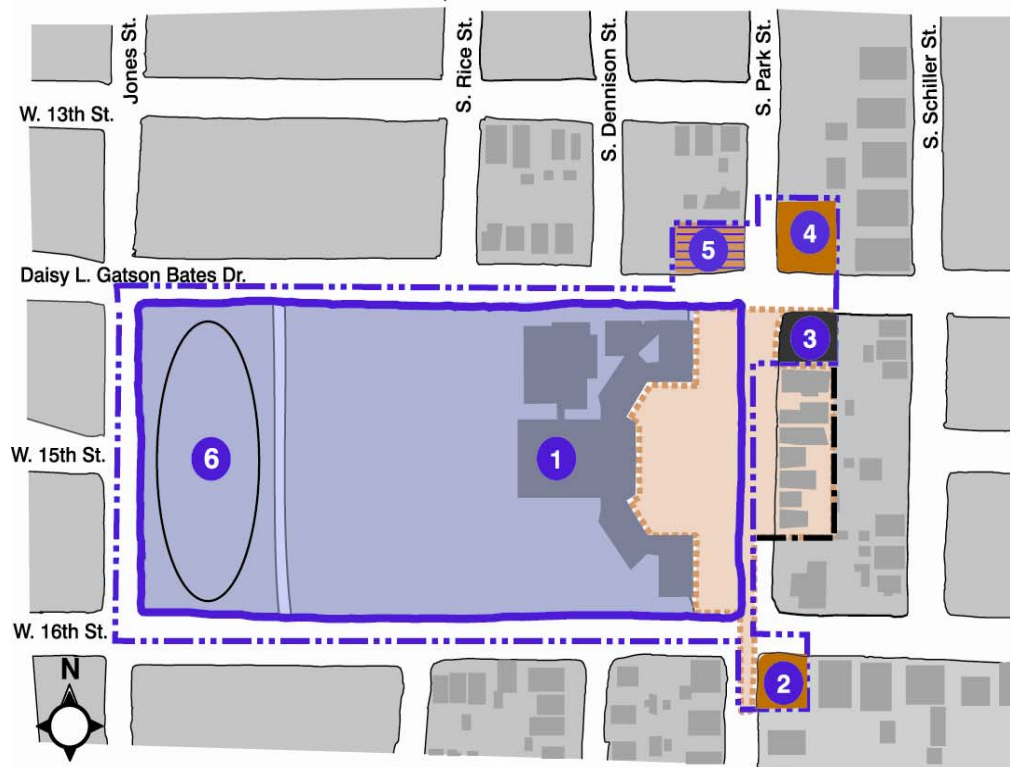


Park Ranger and potential future rangers in the visitor center, 2003

Management Prescriptions

Management prescription areas describe what specific visitor experiences and resource conditions would be achieved and maintained and the facilities necessary to achieve them. Grounded in the park's purpose, significance, and mission goals, they are tools for the on-the-ground integration of visitor use with resource management. In formulating alternatives for future park conditions and management, these prescriptions were placed in different configurations on each alternative to achieve the concept of that alternative.

Five management prescriptions were developed for Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site: Visitor Services, Administration, and Operations; Interpretive and Visitor Education; School; Contemplative; and Historic Scene. The map on the next page shows the five management prescription areas plus Quigley Stadium. These were identified in the preferred alternative of the GMP. Each prescription area is mapped and described in the following pages, which are excerpted from the GMP.



- Boundary of National Historic Site
- Boundary of National Historic Landmark
- - - Boundary Expansion
- School Area
- Historic Scene Area
- Visitor Services, Administration, Operations Area
- Interpretive Education Area
- Contemplative Area

MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

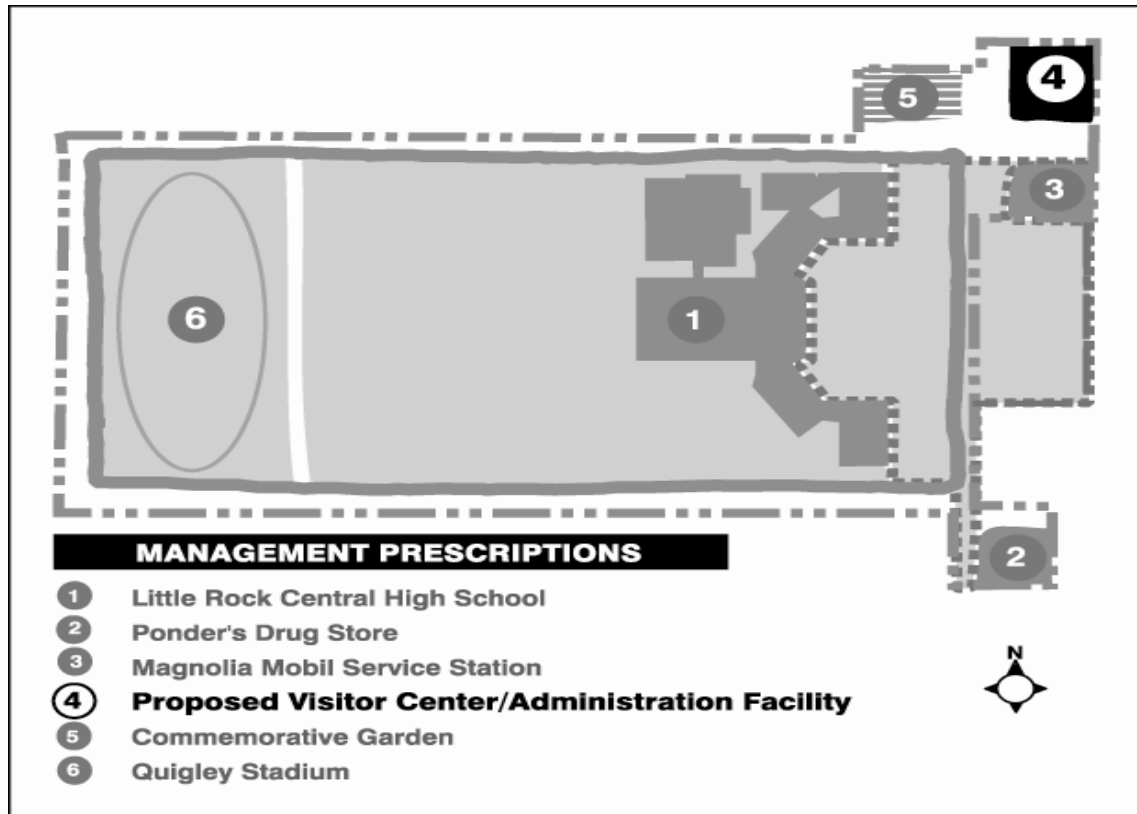
- 1 Little Rock Central High School
- 2 Ponder's Drug Store
- 3 Magnolia Mobil Service Station
- 4 Proposed Visitor Center/Administration Facility
- 5 Commemorative Garden
- 6 Quigley Stadium

Preferred Alternative

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
DSC • 037 • 20010B • MAR 2004

Visitor Services, Administration, and Operations Area



Visitor Experience

The visitor experience in this area would be highly social and focused on interpretation, orientation, visitor comfort, and safety. This structured environment would be highly accessible, and contacts with site staff and other visitors would be common; overcrowding would be avoided. Visitors would have an opportunity to get an overview of site resources in a short time with a minimum of physical exertion. An opportunity to understand the interpretation of themes would be an important element. Visitors would have an opportunity to purchase materials related to the historic events. Learning about the park through media and tours, short walks, and interpretive programs would be common activities.

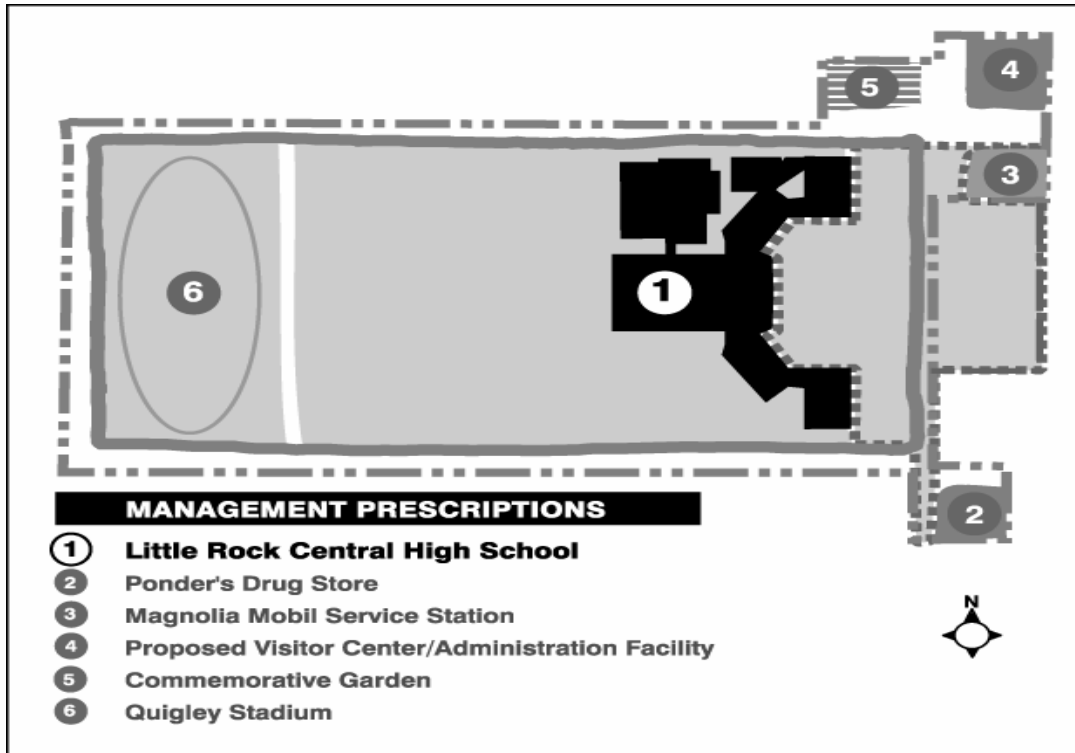
Resource Conditions

The area would be located in adaptively used historic structures or in areas that were previously disturbed by development. The desired resource conditions of these structures would include such things as retention and preservation of historic architectural character, preservation of as much historic fabric as possible, and rehabilitation. Although the environment could be highly modified in this area, pollutants and other disturbances (e.g., storm-water runoff and dust from construction) would be contained and mitigated before affecting adjoining areas. This area would tolerate a high degree of impacts from visitors. Archeological resources would be salvaged, if necessary.

Facilities

To the greatest degree practical in this area, facilities would be models of best management practices and sustainable development. Also, the area would serve as a staging area for more extended tours. Orientation and interpretation facilities such as a visitor center, wayside exhibits, and other interpretive media would be appropriate. Support facilities such as restrooms and first-aid areas, hardened circulation areas, and parking could be present. Space could be available for research activities. The area could include structures and grounds used for administration and operations. Facilities for site utilities and communication needs would be located in this area. Facilities would provide a safe, efficient, comfortable, and aesthetic work environment for park staff.

School Area



Visitor Experience

Visitors would have access inside the school only by park ranger-guided, scheduled group tours. These activities would not interfere with the function of the school. Predominant activities would be interpretive walks and talks and viewing of the resource from the cultural landscape. Students and visitors would have a high level of contact on the grounds of the school depending on the time of day or season of the year; contacts between visitors and students would be minimal inside the school building.

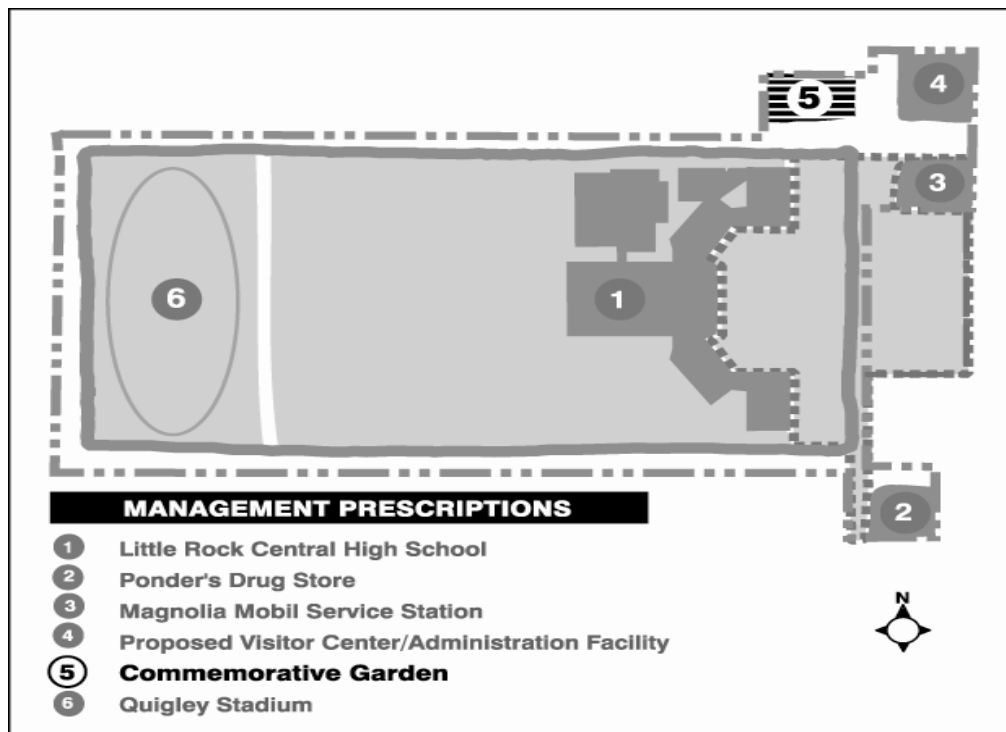
Resource Conditions

The school would continue to evolve to meet the needs of the students. Resources to be maintained by the school district include school buildings, grounds (particularly in front of the school), sports fields used as an encampment area behind the school buildings, and Quigley Stadium at the back of the school property.

Facilities

No park facilities would be in this area. The school district would continue to administer this area.

Contemplative Area



Visitor Experience

The primary experience in this area would involve reflection on the history and significance of the events at the Little Rock Central High School site. Although adjacent to higher use areas, this out-of-doors setting would allow a degree of solitude. Additional monuments would not be permitted in this zone. Encounters with park staff would be low, and encounters with other visitors would be moderate to low depending on the time of day and season of the year.

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Resource Conditions

Vegetation within this prescription would be managed to provide for seclusion, safety and access. The natural resources of the landscape could be modified, but they would remain compatible with their surroundings.

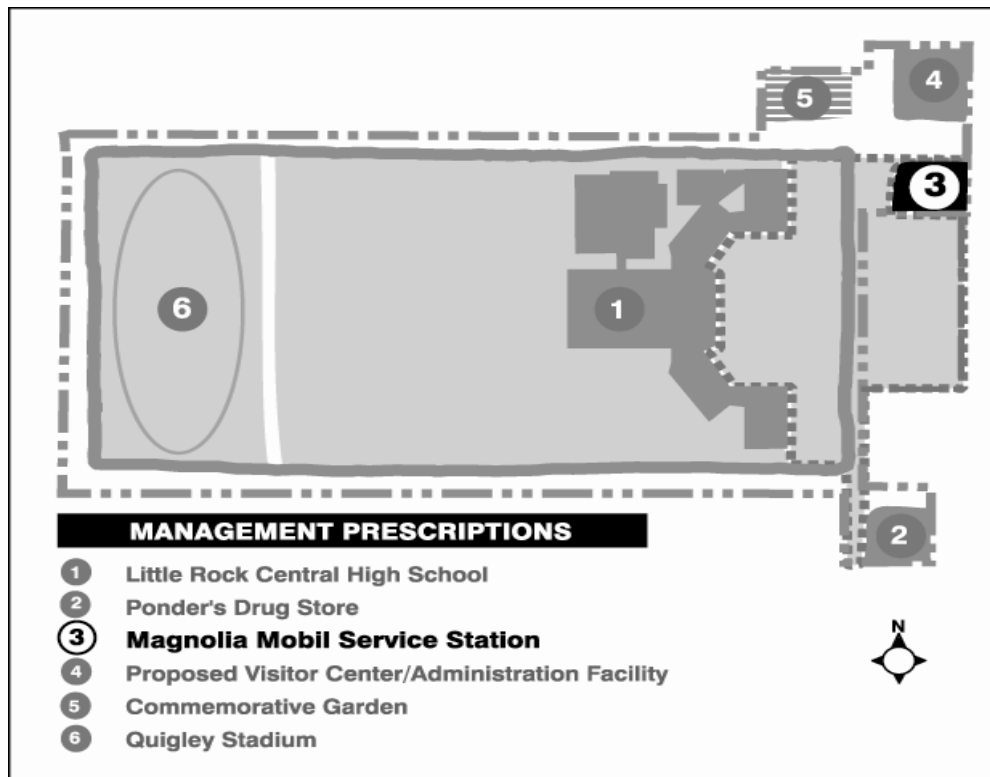
Facilities

Facilities include minimal paths with benches, shade, and a minimal number of interpretive signs. This area is accessible.



Commemorative Garden

Interpretive and Visitor Education Area



Visitor Experience

The primary experience would involve learning about the significance of the park and the Civil Rights movement as well as allowing for special programs. These experiences would take place in an easily accessible classroom environment. There would be a high probability of encountering other visitors and students of all ages and learning abilities in a structured environment. Encounters with site staff would be frequent.

Resource Conditions

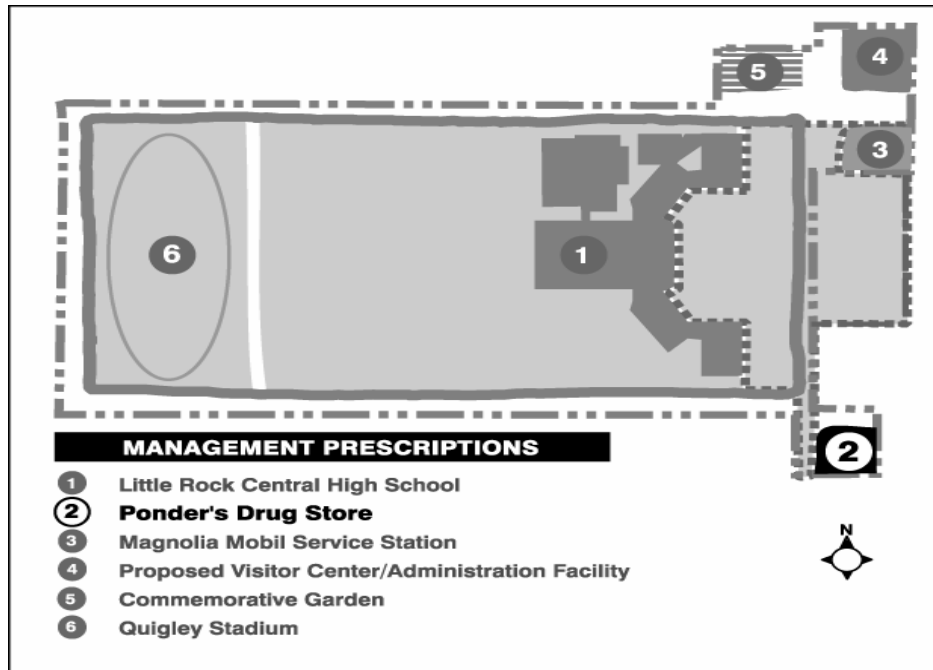
The area would be intensively managed to ensure protection of cultural resources and provide for public safety. Areas would be managed to provide the best and most appropriate learning environment. Resources could be modified for essential visitor services, but they would be changed in a way that harmonizes with the environment.

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Facilities

Either new or adaptively used historic structures would serve as a structured-learning environment with appropriate support facilities (restrooms and storage).

Historic Scene Area



Visitor Experience

Visitors could enter this area and view park resources preserved to the historic period. The environment would recreate the atmosphere of the late 1950s in Little Rock with as little modern intrusion as possible. High visitor and student encounters could be expected in this area depending on the time of day or season of the year.

Resource Conditions

This area would be managed to provide the most historically accurate environment. Resource management techniques will promote preservation or restoration of cultural resources. Cultural resources would be provided with a high degree of preservation and protection. Natural resources would be managed to remain compatible with their surroundings and to accommodate the needs of the school.

Facilities

Limited visitor amenities that would not impact cultural resources would be provided within these areas (such as benches and unobtrusive wayside exhibits), and interpretation would be of a type not to impinge on site resources.

Issues and Concerns

This section is excerpted from the GMP. It identifies issues and other considerations that can affect visitors' experiences in the park. The LRIP provides a strategy for addressing these issues.

Visitor Experience Issues

Neighborhood: The development of a new national park in a residential area that is directly across from an operating school raises concerns about potential impacts on the quality of life for those who live and work in the area. There are concerns about safety, noise, congestion, air quality, and roads. The NPS will work to educate visitors about private property areas in an attempt to mitigate impacts to the private homes, such as trespassing and litter.

Visitor Experience: The current visitor center is extremely small (1,717 square feet). It contains a small exhibit area, a lobby, one office, and a small staff room. This facility has reached its capacity (23,000 visitors/year). The exhibit area can comfortably accommodate 30 visitors at one time. It is a common occurrence to have 40-50 visitors inside the exhibit and lobby area at one time. Because of the extremely limited space, a reservation system is in place, whereby organized groups can schedule guided tours of the visitor center exhibits in advance. However, many tour and coach groups and walk-in visitors arrive unannounced. There have been occasions when several unscheduled commercial tour buses have arrived at the same time. These visitors are not turned away; they are asked to wait outside the building until the exhibit area clears. This situation routinely occurs during the months of April through October. February (Black History Month) is also an extremely high visitation month. Current visitation levels often exceed the building's carrying capacity. Due to this space limitation, many visitors are unwilling to wait to enter the exhibits;

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therefore, they leave without experiencing even the limited interpretive opportunities available. The National Historic Site (NHS) is in a residential setting directly across the street from a high school along South Park Street. Without the benefit of a ranger-led tour, some visitors are unwilling to walk the entire two blocks of the NHS because they perceive possible safety issues. In addition, the lack of adequate signage discourages visitors from entering the visitor center because they often do not realize that interpretive and visitor services are available inside.

Education and Interpretation: The service station has one office. There is limited space available to develop the variety and extent of education and interpretation programs or outreach activities needed to provide a quality experience. There is limited space for staff to produce basic education and interpretation programs. Because the exhibit area is small (~500 square feet), the existing exhibits are not comprehensive. Space constraints do not allow for placing collections on display or for expanding interpretation opportunities. The small size of the exhibit area in the service station precludes opportunities to provide visitors with the full story of the historic site.

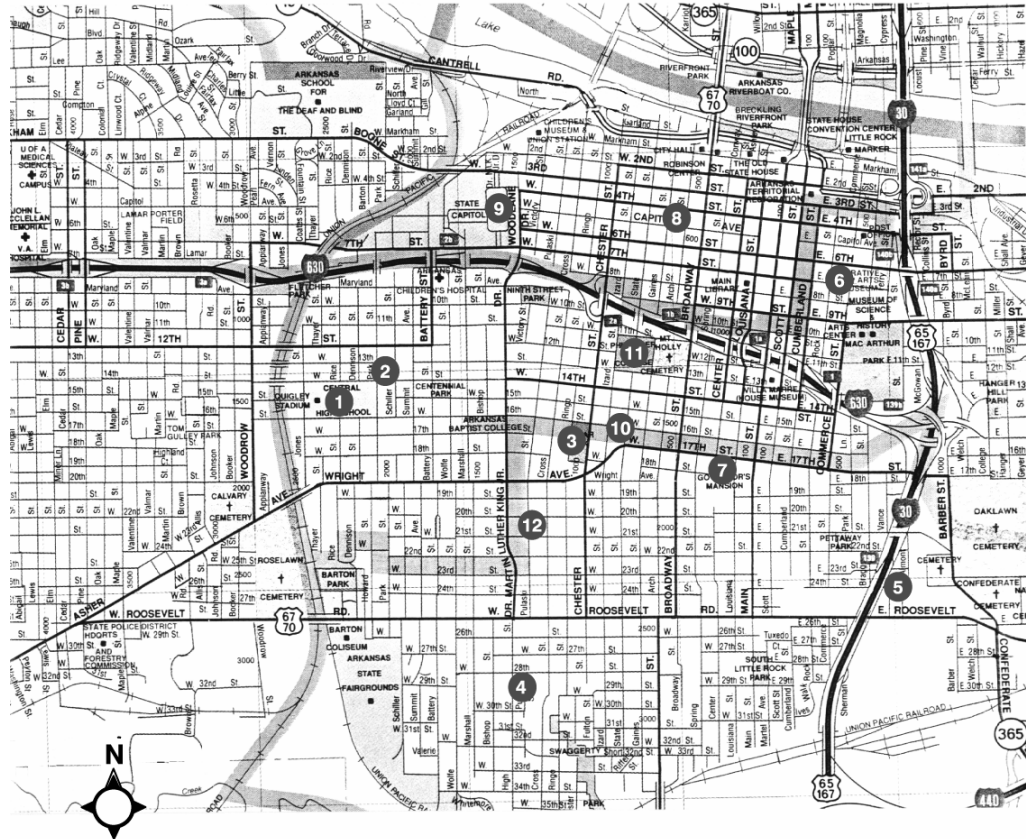
Museum Collections: There is no space in the visitor center for basic exhibit storage. As a result, the museum collection is located offsite in the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Archives and Special Collections and in storage at the federal building offices. There is insufficient staff on the site to provide curatorial services. The collection is expected to grow as the site becomes more widely known and research continues. Appropriate facilities and staff need to be provided to accommodate this increased collection.

Administration and Park Operations: The visitor center contains a small exhibit area, lobby, and one office. There is limited space for additional staff, storage, exhibits, and other necessary operational functions. There is very little space for staff to perform the basic operations of the park and visitor center. Adequate administrative/headquarters space is required to provide a quality visitor experience and fulfill the mission of the historic site. Administrative staff are currently located in offsite offices, two miles away.

Partnerships: Other organizations with which the NPS may develop agreements potentially play an important role in interpreting the park story and preserving resources.

The School: Central High School is a fully-operational, four-year public high school. Issues and concerns associated with this resource include increased traffic at certain times of the day, which could affect student and visitor safety and student security concerns arising from public tours of the school.

Existing Conditions

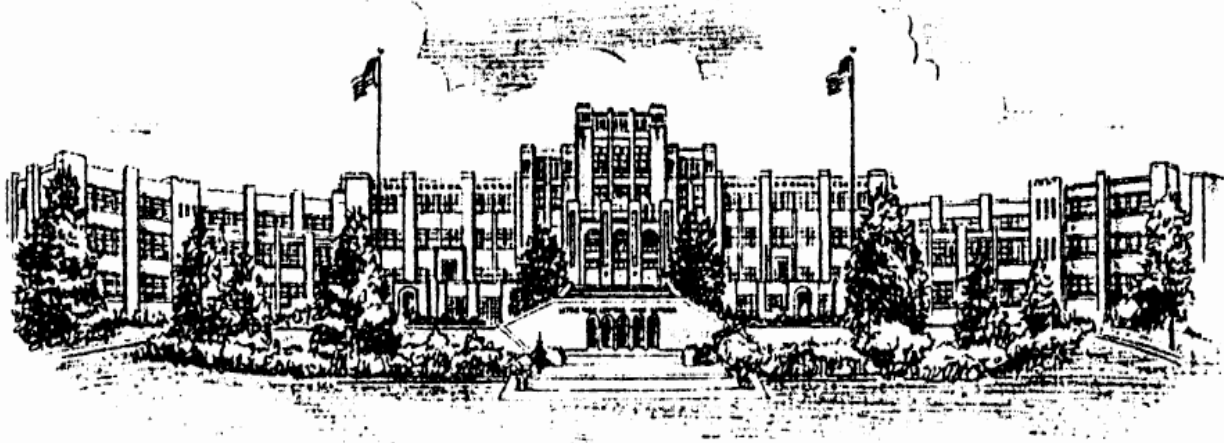


- 1 Little Rock Central High School
- 2 Magnolia Mobil Service Station
- 3 Dunbar Jr. High School
- 4 Daisy Bates House National Historic Landmark
- 5 Horace Mann Jr. High School
- 6 Terry Mansion
- 7 Governor's Mansion
- 8 U.S. Courthouse
- 9 State Capitol
- 10 Bethel A.M.E. Church
- 11 Philander Smith College
- 12 Ernest Green House

Related Interpretive Sites

Little Rock Central High School
National Historic Site

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
DSC • 037 • 20013 • AUG 2001



Little Rock Central High School

The Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site is located in the capital city of Little Rock, Arkansas. It is surrounded by the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District. The school operates as a 4-year public high school under the administration of the Office of the Superintendent, Little Rock School District. Student enrollment is approximately 2,400 and the faculty numbers 115. Today it is the largest of six high schools in the Little Rock School District and the only one located in the inner city. The student body represents a cross-section of the community, drawing from the most affluent areas of Little Rock and from a broad swath of middle- and low-income areas. Central High School has served the metropolitan area for many years as an unofficial magnet school, and it now houses an International Studies Magnet component within the school curriculum. Considered a national model in the field of human relations, Central High School is a participant in the Model Schools Program sponsored by the National Governors Association.

The total amount of land within the authorized boundary is 27 acres. The site boundary encompasses the following lands and interests:

- the Little Rock Central High School building and its 21-acre campus, which were designated a national historic landmark on May 20, 1982

Existing Conditions

- the Central High Visitor Center which is located in the restored Magnolia Mobil Service Station on the southeast corner of Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive and South Park Street
- a 1926 commercial building currently operating and privately owned (that housed Ponder's Drug Store in 1957) on the southeast corner of West 16th and South Park Street*
- a commemorative garden on the northwest corner of Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive and South Park Street
- a vacant lot on the northeast corner of Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive and South Park Street

**This property is not currently in federal ownership.*

Statistics show that Central High is the most-visited site in Arkansas. People come, take pictures, then leave.

We've done such a good job disguising the Visitor Center by putting it in the restored gas station that people have trouble finding us. We need improved facilities, signage, and identity.

Visitors and Visitor Experience

The following section was adapted from the GMP.

The Magnolia Mobil Service Station serves as the current visitor center: the Central High Visitor Center. The station has been rehabilitated to its 1957 appearance. It is approximately 1,717 square feet. Its visitor area contains a small lobby and sales area, a ~500 square feet exhibit area, and restrooms. "All the World is Watching Us: Little Rock and the 1957 crisis" is the permanent exhibit. There is no charge to enter the visitor center.

The visitor center was created by the Central High Museum, Inc. (the museum board) which was instrumental in the establishment of the site. The museum board raised money to rehabilitate and operate the Central High Visitor Center. The visitor center was transferred to the NPS in January, 2002.

Existing Conditions

The exhibit and lobby area can accommodate one tour group or approximately 30 people comfortably. The area has accommodated a maximum of 50 visitors but this does not provide a quality visitor experience. Because of the small space, a reservation system is in place through which organized groups can call ahead and schedule a guided tour of the exhibit area or school. Every effort is made to avoid scheduling conflicts and having multiple groups in the building at one time, but this is not always possible to avoid. From April through November, and in February (Black History Month) the capacity of the visitor center is exceeded. Many visitors leave without experiencing the exhibits. Parking for 12 cars is available. Parking needs may exceed capacity especially during the school year. Approximately 150 buses annually deliver students and tour groups. There is no designated area for bus loading and unloading. There is a lack of adequate signs and visitors often do not realize that the restored service station is, in fact, a visitor center.

Visitors look at exhibits, talk to park staff, and purchase books and other materials from the cooperating association bookstore. Exhibits are professionally designed and fabricated; they provide an attractive and interesting summary of the events of 1957-58. Formal interpretive talks and tours of the exhibits are given to school groups.

Programs for school groups are a main focus of the interpretive effort at the visitor center. In FY2003, 5,509 students attended 191 formal interpretive programs. Tours of the visitor center exhibits are offered for grades four through twelve and use displays and photographs to illustrate the story. Each year, park staff conduct several off-site programs for professional and civic organizations and school groups. Interior tours of the high school began in October 2000 and are offered to organized groups by reservation only during the school year.

An unknown number of visitors walk the block in front of Central High School to view the school and historic scene. There are no signs or brochures that explain the events that happened there. The staff conducts occasional tours of the site for groups by reservation and offers scheduled, summer walking tours of the historic streetscape. Other than these occasional tours, there is no NPS presence once visitors exit the visitor center. There is no distinction between site resources and private property. The area is a neighborhood of private homes, and due to its location in the inner city, some visitors have limited the extent of their walks across from the high school due to perceived safety concerns.

Existing Conditions

A commemorative garden is located on the northwest corner of Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive and South Park Street. The garden was commissioned and funded by the Central High Museum, Inc. (the museum board). It was completed in the fall of 2001 and serves as a place for visitors to contemplate the lessons of 1957.

Visitation at the site would likely increase if marketing, signs, and on-site infrastructure were improved. The site needs better marketing so that people know there is something to visit. Signs and directions to the site are not easily recognizable.

In 2003, 23,348 people visited the Central High Visitor Center. About 24% of visitors have been part of guided group tours and about 76% have been public visitors who arrive with no reservation. Visitors have come from all 50 states – Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, and Missouri are the most frequently represented – and more than 70 countries.

Existing Interpretive Program

Currently, site staff offer formal interpretive programs at the visitor center, within the historic streetscape area, and in the high school by reservation to organized groups. Interpretive staff have developed three additional programs during 2003 that address more of the interpretive themes and multiple points of view, such as a program on segregationist reaction to Central's desegregation. Interpretive methods are often limited by the lack of space in the existing visitor center. Still, site staff have developed new programs and conduct special programs and events throughout the year to mark occasions such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the anniversary of the 1957 Crisis. Site staff work with partners throughout the city to provide facilities for lectures, as the current visitor center does not offer the flexibility for such programs onsite.

In 2002, the interpretive staff developed a publications plan and in 2003, began implementing that plan by developing two new site bulletins and the site's first park newsletter. Also in 2003, staff began the site's initial Jr. Ranger program and held a "Jr. Ranger Rally" in July.

Education Program

The formal, curriculum-based education program at Central High School National Historic site is just beginning with the hiring, in late 2003, of the site's first education specialist. Education programs provide formal learning opportunities for students to forge intellectual and emotional connections to the site's story. The purpose of the education program is to present the park story in an engaging and informative manner through multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory approaches. Students need to understand multiple perspectives and linkages to the larger civil rights movement. Educational services will incorporate park interpretive themes and school curricula, serving both onsite and offsite audiences, and will be based on active partnerships with educational institutions.

Partnerships

The site's General Management Plan calls for the National Park Service to enter into cooperative agreements with the Little Rock School District, Central High Museum, Inc., and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to develop interpretive and education programs.

Currently, the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site has entered into cooperative agreements with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the Little Rock School District to provide expanded opportunities for interpreting the park's story. Central High Museum, Inc. is now the park's cooperating association and will work with the site staff to develop additional interpretive materials and programs.

Present Staffing

Current staff in the interpretive division includes the division chief, a full-time education specialist, one full-time park ranger, one full-time SCEP park ranger, and two part-time STEP park guides. In addition, the staff includes one public history graduate assistant through a cooperative agreement with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Existing Conditions



President Clinton and the Little Rock Nine

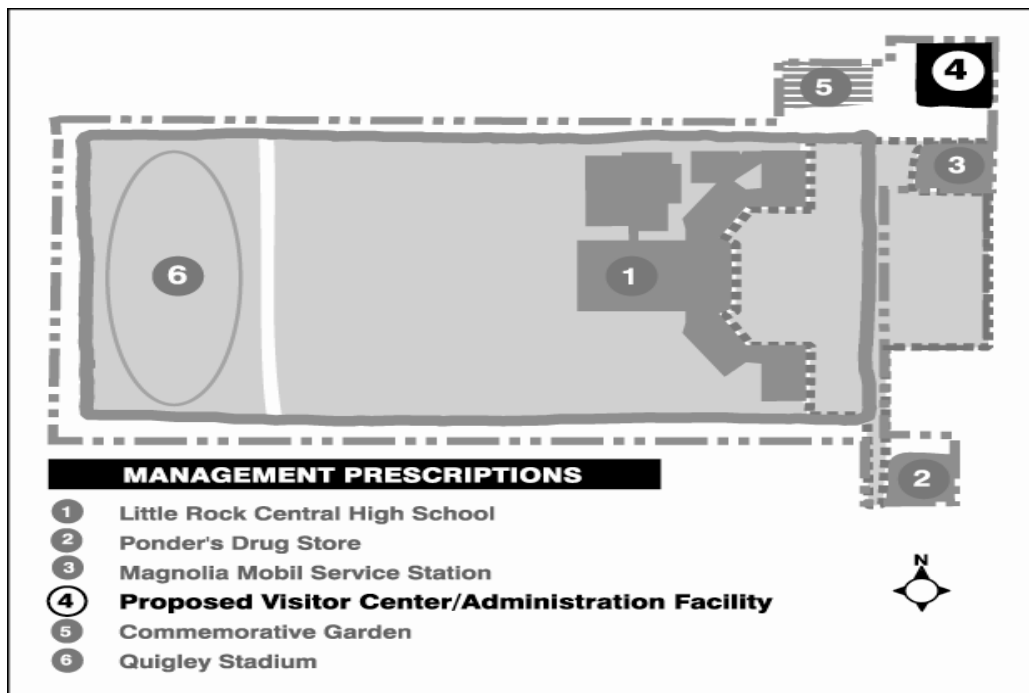
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following actions are recommended to be implemented over the next 5-10 years. They are designed to help accomplish park purpose and goals and meet the needs of both resources and visitors.

This section describes recommendations rather than decisions, and avoids setting strict timeframes and linear priorities. Important actions will stand out and be identified through normal operating procedures at the park; some will compete at the regional and national levels.

Recommendations are organized by the five management prescription areas. Summaries of relevant comments by workshop participants and stakeholders are in italics. Actions are listed at the end of each section as needed, and compiled in an Implementation Plan at the end of the Recommendations Section. These actions are consistent with the site's General Management Plan, but may be refined during site specific planning for the visitor center and other site facilities.

Visitor Services, Administration, and Operations Area



Recommendations

Facilities

Facilities in this management prescription area will include a new visitor center and a rehabilitated/adaptively used Ponder's Drug Store. All facilities will be universally accessible and will be models of best management practices and sustainable development and operations to the greatest degree practical.

Visitor Center

The new visitor center will be located at the northeast corner of South Park Street and Daisy L. Bates Drive. For most park visitors it will be their first stop – welcoming, setting context, orienting, provoking thought and reflection, and providing a multi-sensory and diverse educational experience. It will serve as the park operations and visitor services center and may provide some administrative space for the park. All interpretive staff offices and some administrative offices will be located in the visitor center. Parking for about 40 cars and five buses will be next to the building.

The interpretive functions of this visitor center are of paramount importance. The park preserves the actual site of events that changed our history and our lives today; yet the site yields none of its significance without effective interpretation. Outdoor interpretation such as wayside exhibits will be necessarily limited because of the need to preserve the cultural landscape. Visitors arriving with little prior knowledge will depend greatly on visitor center interpretation (personal and non-personal) to help them connect with park meanings and significance.

Primary Functions

- Orient visitors to the park and to related sites around the city and region; encourage and facilitate visits to park and related sites
- Interpret all primary themes for public visitors and scheduled groups
- Provide inviting, interesting, provocative, thought-provoking experiences for diverse visitors that address multiple-perspectives
- Provide needed visitor services
- Provide office and work space for park interpretive staff

Public Spaces

The following activity areas would accomplish the above functions (the existing Mobil service station will become a dedicated education center):

Lobby
Information
Exhibitions
Theater
Outdoor orientation/interpretation
Cooperating Association Bookstore
Multi-purpose area
Library/research/media center
Office/work/storage areas

Design Guidelines

Lobby

This space provides a provocative and theme-related arrival experience and queuing space for arriving and departing groups. Seating should be available. It is desirable that most activity areas (e.g., exhibition area, restrooms, available park staff, bookstore, theater) be visible from the lobby.

Information

A staffed information area should be visible to visitors as they enter the building. The area should be close enough so that staff can personally greet visitors. Orientation and informal interpretation should be supported. Bookstore sales may be conducted from this area.

Actions

- Update PMIS statement to correspond with recommended functions and with space and funding needs
- Secure funding for visitor center
- Participate in value-based planning and design for visitor center

Exhibits

Goals

- Interpret all primary interpretive themes
- Connect the interpretive stories with orientation to park resources and experiences

Recommendations

- Provide engaging, multi-sensory experiences designed to appeal to diverse audiences
- Place special emphasis to communicate effectively to children
- Provide historical, social, and temporal context for events
- Introduce people involved in related historical and contemporary events
- Provide multiple perspectives of historical and contemporary events
- Encourage visitors to develop their own emotional and intellectual connections with the park stories and experiences
- Provide limited and essential information, as is generally effective for exhibits, and indicate how visitors may find more in-depth information

Exhibits are important elements in telling the park story. A variety of exhibit media can be used, including graphics, objects, text, audiovisual presentations and interactive media. Multiple learning styles and senses will be engaged and visitors will have an opportunity to learn multiple perspectives of the events and their relevance.

The role played by exhibits in historical parks is often different in scale than those for natural or recreational areas. People are not visiting to experience natural phenomena or seek outdoor recreation. Most visitors seek to learn, experience actual sites and resources, honor important people and events, and otherwise derive personal meaning and benefit.^{1 2} Exhibits will stimulate learning, reveal meanings associated with sites and resources, introduce people and events, and help visitors develop their own senses of meaning and benefit. Much of the park purpose (“. . .interpret for the benefit, education, and inspiration of present and future generations, Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and to interpret its role in the integration of public schools and the development of the Civil Rights movement in the United States.”) will be accomplished in the exhibition area. Consequently the exhibition space requirements are higher than for exhibits in many other parks with comparable visitation. Also, this site requires the kind of interactive, immersive, and stimulating exhibits that have been shown to attract and hold the attention of diverse visitors.³

¹ Cameron, Catherine M., and John B. Gatewood. 2000

² Goldman, Theresa L., Jasmine We-Li Chen, and David L. Larsen. 2001

³ National Park Service, 2001; Doering and Pekarik, 1996; Harvey, Mark L., Margie Marino, and Ross J. Loomis. 1996;

Recommendations

Total area would be roughly 3,000 square feet (this is subject to change pending further design analysis). Exhibits would be multi-sensory, incorporating audiovisual components, immersion experiences, and a variety of interactive opportunities. Learning stations for school and family groups would be incorporated into exhibits. Alcoves or comparable design elements would accommodate small groups working together. Experiences specifically designed for children would be incorporated throughout the area.

Space for traveling exhibitions is a high priority – this was emphasized by many participants of planning workshops. About 500 to 1000 square feet would be required.

I think it is very important to have space for traveling exhibits. We would host exhibits from related sites such as Brown v. Board of Education or the Smithsonian. The same space could be used for education activities.

I'd like to see a visitor center with both permanent and changing exhibit space. Changing exhibit space could be used for park- and partner-produced exhibits, and for traveling exhibits.

--- workshop participants

It is a high priority to let visitors hear the stories of people involved in the 1957/58 events, the civil rights movement, and Central High School today. Exhibits will give most visitors access to those stories through media such as videos, computer-based programs, and graphics and text. People and stories will represent multiple perspectives of historical and contemporary issues.

Another interpretive approach to consider is a guided experience. By the very choices you make as a visitor following the story, you end up in different places in the Museum/Visitor Center.

We might consider patterning our experience from the model provided by the Smithsonian at the Japanese Internment Exhibit. In addition to oral history interviews the people featured answered eight different questions. You get different perspectives and feel some how you've experienced this more in its entirety.

-- workshop participants

Recommendations

Actions

- Produce visitor center exhibits through value-based planning and design process, guided by front-end and formative evaluations, and in concert with building development
- Maintain current Magnolia gas station exhibits in some form, possibly as traveling exhibits
- Ensure that interpretation incorporates multiple perspectives

Theater

Approximately 90 people would be accommodated. The theater would provide a quality environment for audiovisual and personal programs: including fixed seating, a raked floor, good acoustics, and surround sound. A low stage in front would be accompanied by adequate stage lighting and audiovisual controls to support lectures and other personal programs. Space for prop storage and to support interpretive and dramatic productions would be considered on either side of the stage. The primary audiovisual program will be a major element of park interpretation; it will be an emotionally compelling program; the impact and effectiveness of the program will require a proper theater environment.

Audiovisual Alcove

There are hundreds of relevant audiovisual programs available. Audiovisual programs are effective with young people and can convey the complexity and emotional impacts inherent in the park story. The addition of a small alcove area to show various audiovisual programs is highly recommended. This could be located in the exhibition area. Bench seating would be adequate. Park staff would have the flexibility to show various programs, including the main park overview program when the auditorium is being used for education activities.

Audiovisual Programs

A 10-20 minute video program will provide an introduction and overview of the park story. Few stories are better suited to a video treatment than Little Rock Central High. This program will be emotionally and intellectually compelling, will engage diverse audiences, and will provide an effective means of connecting visitors with the events and people of this story. Much original film footage and many photographs are available. They are often costly, but they are necessary for telling the story. The video will provide enough

information so that an uninitiated viewer will receive a complete overview of the site story.

Outdoor visitor center orientation/interpretation

Outdoor interpretation at this site will be respectful of the cultural landscape. Because of its location in the inner city urban landscape, outdoor interpretation at the visitor center will be limited to a panel to provide after hours interpretation. Other forms of interpretation, such as brochures and computer kiosks bring concerns about vandalism and litter, but a kiosk that would be resistant to damage, vandalism, and weather could be considered. The commemorative garden provides interpretation/contemplation for visitors outside of regular operating hours.

If acquired, the Ponder's building will provide opportunities for a storefront or other outdoor display. Site staff will work to avoid unnecessary intrusions to the cultural landscape, but may consider (in consultation with the school district) waysides on school grounds, if they can be positioned so as not to detract from the historic setting.

Bookstore

The Central High Museum, Inc. is the cooperating association for Central High School National Historic Site and operates the sales outlet in the visitor center. The primary purpose of the sales outlet is to provide educational materials for visitors as part of the interpretation and education program. A secondary purpose is to generate revenue to support interpretation and education services. The bookstore should be located near the information area and near the place where visitors will usually exit the building. In addition, the bookstore's design will be compatible with the overall design of the visitor center. It is strongly recommended that there be sufficient space for display of multiple titles and for sufficient circulation space (especially during times when schools and other groups are visiting). It is also recommended that seating be available and browsing encouraged, while ensuring that bookstore or site staff can adequately monitor the area for security purposes. Space needs are estimated to be from 500 to 1000 square feet, and that figure will be honed during design. The association and/or a professional museum retail designer need to be involved in the design of the sales area.

Recommendations

All present agreed that comfortable seating in the bookstore was important. This might be a good area where people too tired to continue on could rest – while the rest of their party proceed to visit the remainder of the park.

-- workshop recorder

Publications

The site will have a park brochure from Harpers Ferry Center; development is scheduled to begin in 2005. This will be a four-color glossy brochure that includes a map of the site and area, photographs, orientation to the park and related sites, and an overview of the interpretive story. The park currently has an interim guide that contains roughly the same elements; it will be updated.

There are advantages to publications: they can be taken home to be read at one's leisure; they can provide in-depth treatments not possible with many other media; graphic materials such as historic photographs can be made available; visitors can choose what topics interest them.

There are many possible topics that could be interpreted through specialty park-produced publications. A park handbook in 80 – 100 pages would present a detailed, readable, and attractive discussion of the park interpretive story. This topic is not represented by current available publications, and would be a valuable addition. Other publications could concentrate on specific aspects of the interpretive story, and could publish materials no longer available or not previously assembled in printed form. However, the initial costs of comprehensive publications are high; NPS funding for park handbooks is no longer available. Sales of a potential publication would need to recover initial costs in a reasonable time frame.

The park would cooperate with partners such as other civil rights areas and the cooperating association to produce needed publications that cover common topics and can be sold in many areas, thus providing revenue to defray production costs. The choice of appropriate topic(s) would depend on park interpretive and educational needs, and on the availability of commercially-produced publications. The park would conduct an analysis to match topics needed with titles available.

A historic resource study of the park is needed. Discussions are underway to produce such a study through partnership arrangements.

Recommendations

The park has produced a Junior Ranger booklet to support a Junior Ranger program.

Site bulletins are single-sheet park-produced interpretive publications that concentrate on specific topics. Within the park's publication plan, site staff have produced a priority list of site bulletins that are needed and will soon begin production. These site bulletins support the park's interpretive themes and include such topics as: the event, the Little Rock Nine, the WEC and the Lost Year, Desegregation in Public Education, Eisenhower and the Use of Executive Authority, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Central High Neighborhood, and other related topics.

Actions

- Work with HFC to produce park brochure
- Update interim park brochure
- Implement plan for park-produced site bulletins
- Analyze publication topics needed and commercial titles available
- Produce historic resource study
- Seek a partner to support cost of a site handbook.

Multi-purpose area

A multi-purpose area is needed for education activities, traveling and temporary exhibits, meetings, and community and special events. The GMP recommends a space of about 2,000 square feet, able to be divided in half with movable room dividers. There should be electrical service to support exhibit and program needs (e.g., floor and wall outlets, phone cables) and sufficient storage. Specific functional design characteristics will be worked out during pre-design.

The Little Rock Area School District is planning new magnet schools with thematic labs that will be used by 30 kids at a time. They will be 1,600 – 1,700 square feet.

The standard classroom in Central High is 30 feet by 30 feet or 900 square feet with an addition 100 square feet for closet and storage space.

-- workshop participants

Recommendations

Website

Continue to improve the park website. Additions will include links to other civil rights-related websites, lesson plans, easier navigation, expanded cooperating association sales, and interactive components. Central High students will become more involved in designing and using the website. Eventually, the website will incorporate distance learning features, such as video-conferencing and live “chat room” opportunities with rangers or with participants in the events, such as the Little Rock Nine. In addition, the park will seek to develop a virtual tour of the site so that school groups who cannot visit will nevertheless be able to experience what the site has to offer. Park staff will work to incorporate information from or link to other related sites as part of its overall interpretive effort.

Library/research/media center

A research library and media center will provide resources for scholars and students of all ages. This center is a major component of the park education program. Estimated space needs are 1,000 square feet. The center can be located at a distance from most public functions, since users will have to check in personally at the information area. The center will be supervised by park staff and volunteers. Partners such as Central High School and the University of Arkansas Little Rock will be involved in planning, design, and operation of this research library

Archives

Archival storage is needed in this building. Current partnership arrangements with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock may soon be terminated. Other off-site archival storage options do not appear feasible. An estimated 500 square feet of climate-controlled space will be needed for this purpose, probably associated with the library/research center. Archival materials would be sought and stored according to a scope of collections statement and collections management plan. Primary needs include support of exhibits and personal services interpretation, and documentation of oral histories. Education programs will require substantial and actively managed materials.⁴

⁴ National Park Service, 2003

Office/work/storage areas

It is imperative to provide sufficient space for staff offices, work space, and storage. Subsequent building programming will establish what is needed.

Actions

- Produce scope of collections statement
- Produce collection management plan
- Continue to improve park website

Ponder's Drug Store

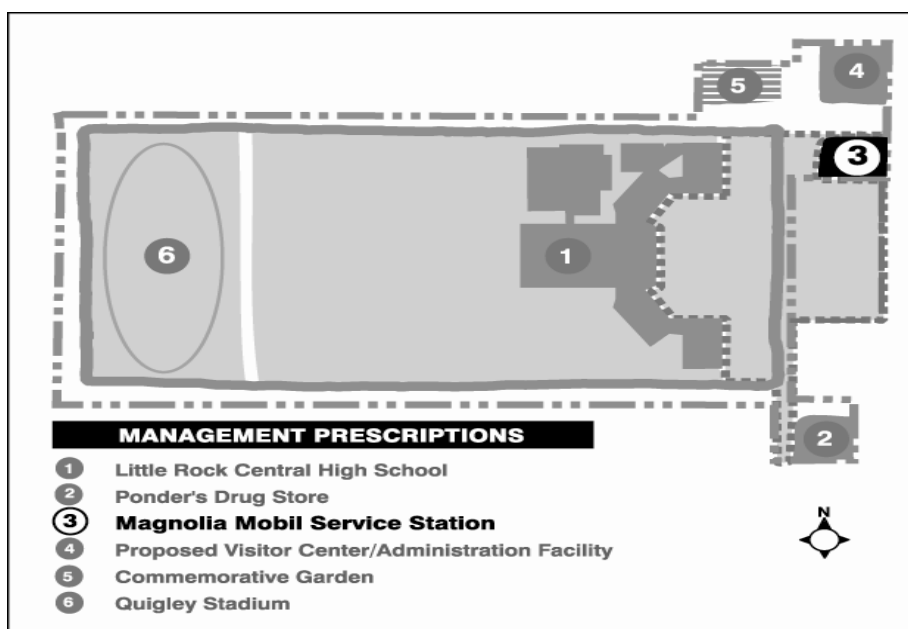
Ponder's Drug Store would be acquired by the Park Service with the consent of the owner. The exterior would be rehabilitated to the 1957 appearance. The interior front room would be rehabilitated to provide space for exhibits that depict student experiences at Central High School during the time of the crisis, incorporating elements from both "The School" and "The Event" interpretive themes. In similar fashion, the storefront could be modified to include exhibits that can be viewed from outside to provide after-hours interpretation at this location. The back room would be adaptively used for offices and other administrative needs.

Actions

- Define building functions.
- Obtain funding (PMIS).
- Produce building design.
- Develop exhibit design.

Recommendations

Interpretive and Visitor Education Area



Education Center (Magnolia Mobil Service Station)

The current visitor center, once the Magnolia Mobil Service Station, will become an education center for scheduled groups. Curriculum-based education programs will be provided for school groups. The center will differ from the visitor center's multi-purpose room in that the programs will be specifically curriculum-based programs for school groups, whereas the multi-purpose room will serve as meeting/program space for other groups, such as scouts, Elderhostel, community groups, staff, etc. Central High School will be an essential partner in the education program.

A separate education plan has been prepared and serves as an essential part of the Comprehensive Interpretive and Education Plan.⁵

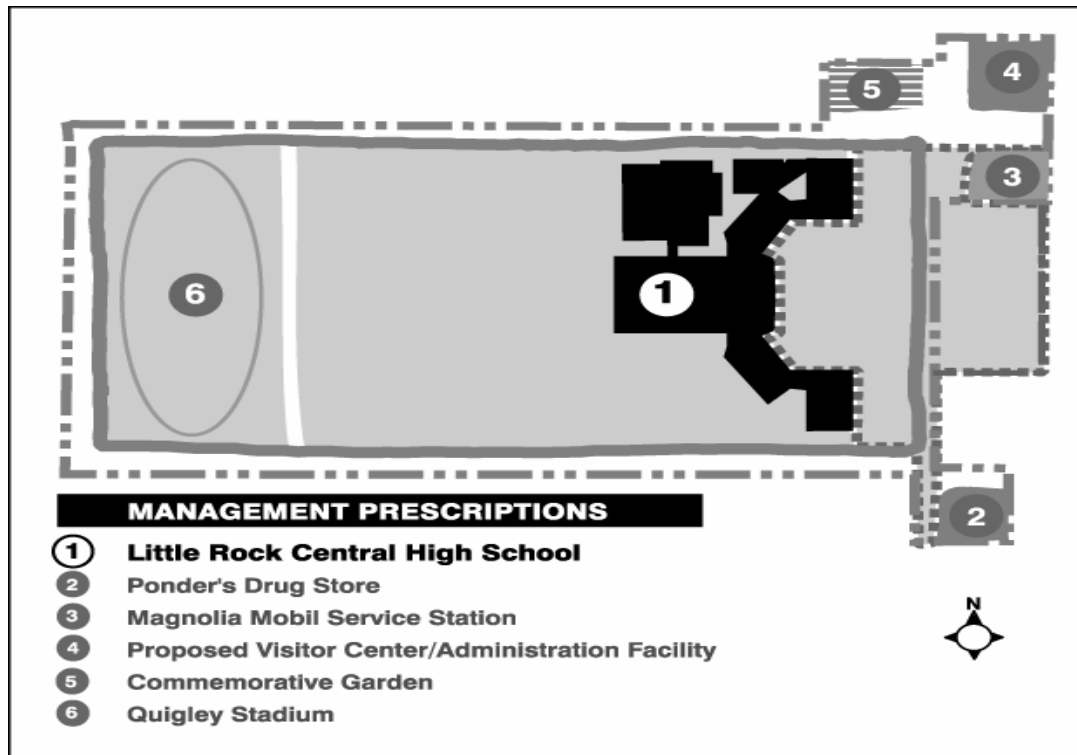
Until the new visitor center is open, the current visitor center will be maintained. This will include the replacement of worn labels and photographs, and adding clarification labels next to text that is obsolete, incorrect, or misleading.

⁵ National Park Service. 2003.

Recommendations

When the new visitor center is open, the current exhibits may be used as temporary/traveling exhibits in other venues. The park will explore the feasibility of this option.

School Area



Little Rock Central High School remains a functioning school and a national historic landmark. CHSC is the only NPS area that includes an active public high school. The Park Service and Little Rock School Board will work to maintain the historic character of the School property to the extent possible. The school building will continue to be maintained by the school district.

Many visitors are interested in the current as well as historic operations of the school. Guided tours of the school are led by park rangers and student volunteers. These occur during school hours and are a partnership program between Central High School and the Park Service. These tours will continue. For obvious reasons of security and possible disruptions, visitors will not be allowed to visit the school outside of scheduled tours. Details of tour operations require careful coordination and monitoring.

Recommendations

School grounds will be accessible and will be of great interest to visitors, especially the block of South Park Street in front of the school where many of the nationally publicized events of 1957 took place. Visitors will be able to take photographs of the school from South Park Street at a spot along the street that approximates the best-known views of the school; one or more wayside exhibits will include historic images made from that area.

Interpret themes: The Event, The School, and Use of Executive Power

With school tours there's a problem of predictability, of timing – we need to deal with this.

It would be nice to offer expanded tour opportunities – weekend tours, lunch tours, for example.

The tour plan should also include Quigley Stadium – this is where the first black student graduated.

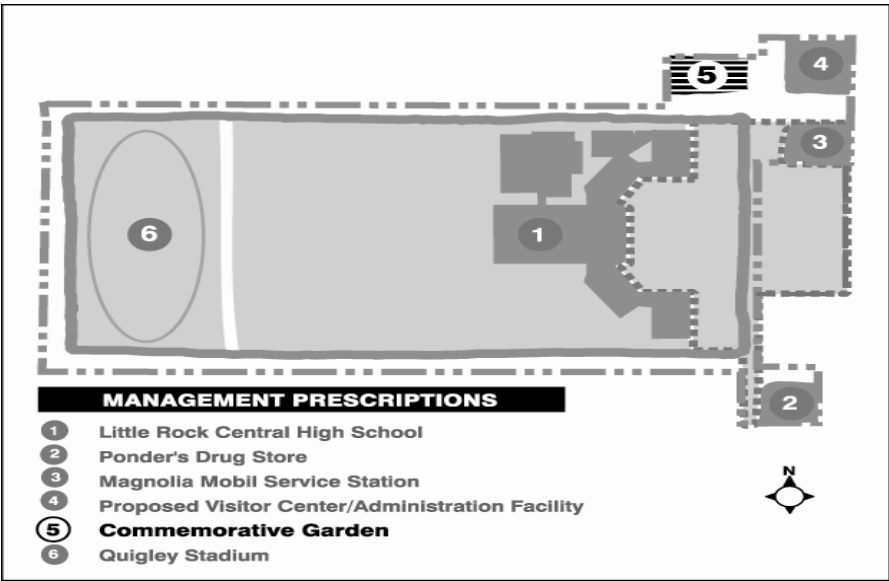
I'd like to be able to bring school tours into Central High's auditorium and cafeteria.

You should also interpret school life of the 1950's. Where are the trophies from that era?

There are too many steps in front of the school. We need to make the school tour route accessible.

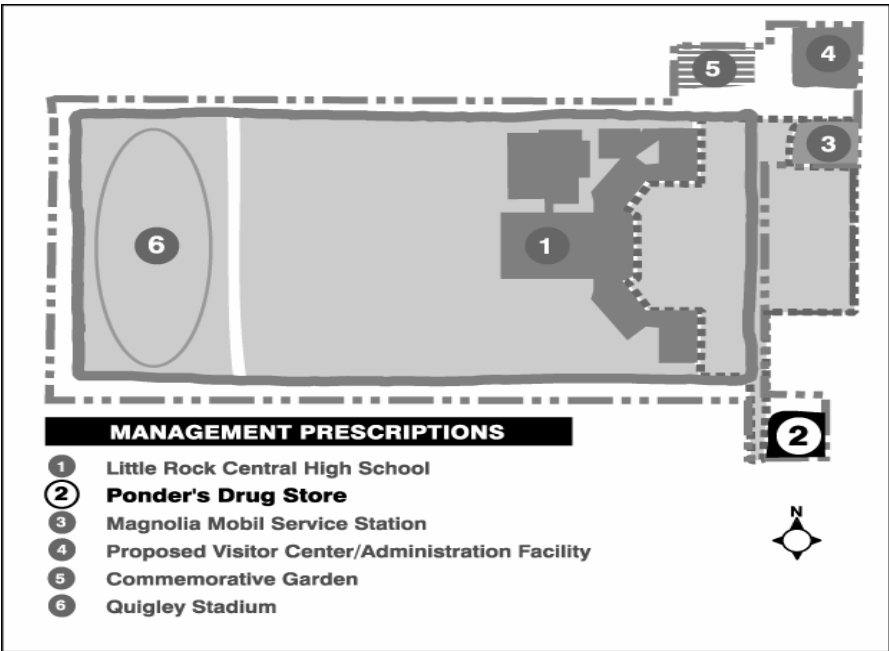
What I'd like to see is some sort of special event where we open the school and connect people with the school, with student volunteers, people who attend and work there now, and people who attended and worked there then.

Contemplative Area



The commemorative garden on the Northwest corner of South Park Street and Daisy Bates Drive would continue to be maintained and accessible as at present.

Historic Scene Area



Recommendations

The historic streetscape consists of the front façade and grounds of the High School and the seven private residences along South Park Street between Daisy Bates Drive and West 16th Street. The historic appearance of this area will be preserved in partnership with property owners, while allowing for contemporary functions of the school and neighborhood. Visitors will have access to the sidewalks on either side of the street and to the front school grounds.

Outdoor sites will be interpreted by publications (especially brochures), wayside exhibits, and personal services (especially guided walks).

Interpret themes: The Event, and The Use of Executive Power

Four areas for wayside exhibits have been identified. All wayside exhibits will be respectful of the cultural landscape and will provide additional interpretation while not intruding upon the historic scene.

1) Magnolia/Mobil station: a wayside exhibit on the grounds of the service station/education center, will provide an opportunity to interpret the Event, and in particular the street scene in front of the school and Elizabeth Eckford's initial attempt to enter Central High. She initially attempted to enter the campus area at this intersection and wayside exhibits can interpret this episode, as well as the larger story of the Nine's attempt to enter the school after Governor Faubus called out the National Guard to prevent them from attending. If feasible and accessible, the wayside exhibit can be designed to mimic the "sandwich board" signs that appear in historic photographs on the gas station's perimeter.

2) Park Street (east sidewalk): Pending a boundary expansion to include the homes across the street from the school, and the owner's agreement, a wayside exhibit could be positioned directly in front of the school, on the opposite side of the street, to allow visitors an opportunity to "see" the historic setting through period photographs while standing in front of the school. Interpretive themes represented here could include the Event, as well as the Use of Executive Power, as historic photographs of the U.S. Army troops, under the president's orders, escorted the Little Rock Nine into the school on September 25, 1957.

3) 16th Street Bus Bench: Site staff will explore the possibility of locating a wayside exhibit (which could be created to mimic the bus bench that once stood there—the bus route no longer runs on 16th Street—to interpret themes of the Event and Equal Rights, as the Nine were barred from entering Central High. Historic photographs show Elizabeth Eckford attempting to escape the mob and waiting on the bench for the bus to take her to her mother’s workplace.

4) Central High School front campus: Here, in particular, wayside exhibits will be positioned in a way not to create an obvious intrusion on the cultural landscape and will remain accessible for visitors. Interpretive themes here could include the School—with information about the 1957-58 year and what it was like inside the school, compared to information about the school today. The Event theme could also be interpreted here, particularly the story from inside the school and the students’ points of view, as they attended classes with federal troops and crowds surrounding the school.

Waysides are appropriate within the Historic Scene management description area as described in the General Management Plan. All waysides will be constructed of fiberglass to provide for durable outdoor interpretive products. The panels will be moisture and ultraviolet resistant and will be resistant to wear, stains, graffiti, and scratches.

In accordance with the General Management Plan, the National Park Service will seek Congressional authorization for expansion of the historic site’s boundary to include the seven residences along Park Street. The NPS will cooperate with the owners of the homes to maintain the exteriors of the structures in a manner consistent with the site’s period of historical significance. If Congress adds the homes to the boundary, NPS assistance could include financial support for historic preservation (if funds are available). As the residences are private property, visitors will be expected to avoid intrusions as with any other private property. This also will be an issue in the wider neighborhood beyond the historic streetscape.

Orienting visitors to where they can properly and safely go in a functioning neighborhood will be a major priority for the Park Service. This would be accomplished through orientation exhibits in the Visitor Center, the tour brochure, and personal services. The Park Service will

Recommendations

maintain active consultation with park neighbors, the Central High Neighborhood Association, and Central High School to properly manage visitor experiences in the area of the park.

Sometimes wayside exhibits can be used to get past the barriers of modern intrusions – by showing the scene during the historic period.

We should consider very limited use of wayside exhibits to maintain visual quality. We need to be very careful

I'd recommend low-profile waysides for wayfinding assistance.

The brochure/walking tour should focus on various sites specific to the '57 events -- sites such as Dunbar, the Bates house, and the site of the troop encampments.

Recorders note: During this point of the meeting the group unanimously supported that a variety of publications is the way to get people around the area. The group endorsed this media concept over waysides due to the visual quality streetscape requirements. The group endorsed waysides only at key locations such as Ponders Drug Store and the Gas Station.

Actions

- Conduct guided tours of the historic streetscape and High School grounds
- Develop wayside exhibits with the HFC Technical Assistance Program.
- Evaluate the usefulness of the park brochures as tour guides for visitors.

The City

Visitors would be encouraged to visit the many related sites around the city and region. Related city sites include Dunbar Middle School, Daisy Bates House National Historic Landmark, Terry Mansion, the Governor's Mansion, the U.S. Courthouse, the State Capitol, and Bethel A.M.E. Church. The park will work with each site to craft appropriate and effective orientation materials. Orientation methods would include formal and informal personal services, exhibits, interactive computer kiosks inside and outside the visitor center, wayside exhibits, and brochures.

How do people feel about tourists coming into town?
Some people live in houses that have historic connections.
How do you think people feel about having tourists in
their neighborhood, parking in front of their houses?

Create formal organized bus tours.

Or, create a brochure with related addresses – with the permission of the current owner.

We should not publicize any address until a neighborhood is prepared with the appropriate level of parking or correct signage and an individual property owner is willing. Some people may not realize that the house they bought has a history.

From a neighborhood perspective we're very excited about the NPS' plans to acquire and restore Ponder's Drug Store.

Will I be able to be served there?

The landscape plan the Neighborhood Association is developing is far reaching. It identifies green spaces, and restaurant sites. We are very concerned about managing and meeting the additional influx of tourists.

I'd like the group to consider placing brochures at the airport, Riverwalk, and at the bus station.

There are other locations in additions to the ones previous mentioned that played a vital role in the story. It's important that we include Horace Mann, Dunbar, and Hall High.

Action

- Consider the possibility of a city tour brochure.

Recommendations

Partnerships

Currently, the NPS has cooperative agreements with the Little Rock School District and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock that specifically address interpretation. Site staff will work with the school district to develop its education program in accordance with district, state, and national curriculum standards. Teachers, social studies specialists, and curriculum specialists will work with site staff to develop and implement the education programs. The site also has entered into a cooperative agreement with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to conduct oral histories of crisis participants. The university's Public History program also provides graduate assistants who perform research and interpretation services for the site.

In addition to these specific cooperative agreements, Central High School National Historic Site will seek out and develop partnerships with related sites, such as Brown v Board of Education NHS, and other African American Experience Fund sites, as well as related sites in Little Rock. Site staff will work to develop joint programming opportunities with these sites.

Central High School National Historic Site will also work to develop partnerships with the school district and the city and neighborhood to develop preservation strategies for the cultural landscape of the high school and surrounding neighborhood.

Actions:

- Strengthen existing partnerships and work cooperatively with the school district to implement first phase of education program—unit of study within existing U.S. History curricula.
- Work cooperatively with the school and city to develop a preservation plan for the campus and surrounding streetscape.
- Begin working to establish partnerships and develop joint programs with partners at related sites.

I'd like to see us link to Brown versus Board – but do more than a website link – actually explore our themes and stories together. Perhaps mutually develop an education program, a traveling exhibit.

Personal Services

A variety of interpretive programs and personal services will be available for the public and for scheduled groups. These will include both formal programs (such as talks, lectures, education programs, and offsite presentations) and informal interpretation (such as greeting visitors at the entrance, educating them about other related sites in the city, roving contacts, etc.) Formal programs will be based on the interpretive themes and will reflect multiple perspectives.

Actions:

- Develop additional formal interpretive programs, ensuring that the interpretive themes are addressed.
- Plan and develop special programs and activities, particularly for key events, such as Daisy Bates Day and the 50th anniversary of Brown v Board.

Education Program

The purpose of the education program is to present the park story, through curriculum-based materials, in an engaging and informative manner through multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory approaches. Students need to understand multiple perspectives and linkages to the larger civil rights movement in the United States. The education program will support the site's purpose and mission by:

- Integrating the NPS into the framework of an operating public high school;
- Enabling teachers and students to make personal connections to the meaning of the site's story and to encourage students to understand the state of race relations today and to participate in the improvement of race relations; and,
- Enabling students to develop an understanding of the constitutional issues associated with the events of 1957 and analyze the economic and social impacts of those events.

Recommendations

Actions:

- Develop initial lesson plans to integrate into school curricula
- Establish relationships with key LRSD personnel to begin development of unit and/or course covering the site's story
- Develop teacher workshops to educate the state's teachers on the site's story and the resources available through the site
- Develop partnerships with related sites, in the city and within the NPS to expand curricular materials to a wider audience.

Research Needs

Oral histories need to be collected; this is a high priority. Histories are currently being collected in partnership with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Interviews will be conducted by trained interviewers; questions should be based on themes, goals, and criteria developed in advance. Methods should follow professional guidelines. Materials will be recorded on videotape, thus allowing materials to be used subsequently in interpretation and education programs and media.

Additional research is needed on a variety of social and historical topics. The Park Service needs to know more about the numbers, patterns, and expectations of visitors. Development of interpretive and educational facilities and media should be guided by front end and formative evaluations. Programs and media should be periodically evaluated to confirm effectiveness. This is especially important when attempting to influence behavior, such as with resource protection or safety messages. How well the overall mix of facilities, services, media, and programs meets visitor, resource, and agency needs can be periodically tested. Visitor surveys are also necessary to gather socioeconomic and customer satisfaction information for Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and other park programs. In FY2003, site staff participated in the park's first visitor survey card program. Nearly 400 cards were distributed in July and results should enable the park's management team to establish baseline measurements for visitor understanding and satisfaction. The results showed that 92% of the park's visitors understood the significance of the site and 99%

were satisfied overall with the site's facilities, services and recreational opportunities.

We need a list – a Rolodex of all the people involved. What I'm talking about are the personal connections. I've got people who come to the Visitor Center and they discover they have the same last name as some one or something connected with the story.

Philander-Smith College has a grant to do oral histories on those connected with this event.

The need for these key oral history interviews is the same for whites. The principal of the school, members of the school board, teachers

*It's important to remember that to kids this is ancient history – a long time ago. As long ago as the era of 'Cowboys and Indians' was to us when we were in school. **We must bring this to life.** One technique used at an Arkansas Museum is to provide interested visitors with free copies of text or transcripts on tape of related oral histories. This has been very popular at one of our sites and has built a tremendous amount of public good will to support the site.*

You need to move on gathering oral history research – many of us are getting old.

It is critical that researchers and media specialists working with the NPS get all the rights at the onset of the project for future use for educational and interpretive purposes.

As an educational tool/technique it might be interesting to develop a standardized list of 10 interview questions, then have participants answer each question. This would allow for interesting comparisons and contrasts by students. In addition, this would give the semblance of interactivity.

There were two state newspapers at the time. It would be interesting to provide students with the coverage of both, then have them compare and contrast what people outside of Little Rock were receiving. We need to move quickly to protect this local resource. Earlier this year one of the newspapers was publicly criticized for throwing out old editions rather than giving them to an institution to archive.

Recommendations

We must remember that the clock is ticking. There are other ways to go about this information -- oral interviews, etc. can be gathered by trained volunteers -- while people are still alive. One question I have -- Will we have people/visitors gathered in one area to watch/listen to these stories for a 5 – 10 minute period?

Many media techniques are possible -- we could have headsets available so that sound would not interfere with the experience of others. Some museums use wand programs very effectively.

I think it is very important that in addition to these transcripts/audio programs included in the permanent Visitor Center exhibits, that we plan for a Library of resources to encourage more in-depth research and study.

Actions

- Work with partners to plan and implement an oral history program.
- Produce a social science plan for the park to describe research needs, priorities, and implementation strategies.
- Employ front-end and formative evaluation on all major interpretive and educational facility and media development.
- Compile related research that has already been done.
- Identify historical and thematic research that is needed; assign priorities; work with partners to accomplish.

Accessibility Guidelines

All facilities, media, programs, and services will be developed to follow existing accessibility guidelines. Programmatic accessibility guidelines are available from Harpers Ferry Center ⁶

Staffing

Future staffing for the new visitor center will include a chief of interpretation & cultural resources (GS-12), two full-performance park rangers (GS-9), one

⁶ National Park Service. 1999

Recommendations

full performance (GS-9) ranger, one education specialist (GS-11), and 3-4 park guides (GS-4/5). With the acquisition of the Ponder's building, interpretive staff will have two locations that will need to be staffed. In addition, inside of the visitor center, staff will be needed to conduct education programs, provide information, interpretation, and formal programs for visitors and staff the research library/collections/archives area. The visitor center is open 7 days/week, 362 days per year, from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

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Planning Team, Stakeholders, and Consultants

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Don Castleberry, CHSC Museum Board
Minnijean Brown, Little Rock Nine
Craig Rains, Central High School Class of '58
Ralph Brodie, Central High School, Class of '58
Dr. Johanna Miller Lewis, President, Central High Museum, Inc., UALR History Department
Marie McNeal, Director of Social Studies, Central High School
Brady Gadberry, Associate Superintendent of Schools (retired)
Sarah Gadberry, Teacher, Central High School
David Ware, Historian, Office of Arkansas Secretary of State
Paddy Murphy, Arkansas State Parks
Bill Worthen, Historic Arkansas Museum
Debbie Milam, Executive Director of Volunteers in Public Schools, Little Rock
Ethel Ambrose, Central High Neighborhood Association
Nancy Rousseau, Principal, Central High School
Amy Snodgrass, Teacher, Central High School
Judy Magness, Little Rock School Board
Bonnie Lesley, Associate Superintendent for Instruction, LRSD
Dr. Erma Glasco Davis, Hot Springs Village, Dunbar High School Alumna
Rett Tucker, Central High Museum, Inc.
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Susan Chambers, Teacher, Central High School
Cheryl Nichols, Central High Museum, Inc.
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Interpretive Themes and Stories

Workshop participants expanded on themes. Summaries of additional stories that may be told are in the shaded areas below.

The Event

The integration of Central High was a landmark battle in the struggle for civil rights. It forced the people of a city and a nation to confront themselves on the issue of discrimination, created an international problem for the country by exposing racism in American society, pitted federal upholding of constitutional civil rights against states rights of self-governance, and provided a foundation for supporting and forging new attitudes of racial tolerance.

The fact that Elizabeth rode the bus to school tells you what we thought was going to happen. She rode the bus because she thought we were going to school. We were really naïve. After the incident, there were a lot of back-up stories created to explain why Elizabeth was on the bus – that she never got the message. But there was never any attempt to reach her – she planned on taking the bus because she thought she was going to school.

A related topic is the 44 teachers that were fired for supporting and assisting the Little Rock Nine. And the role of the Women's Emergency Committee – in fact things were so bad here that the membership list for the Women's Emergency Committee was not released for forty years. There was a strong fear of possible retribution.

Students that attended Dunbar had to walk past Central High.

Identify and interpret the number of private schools that were established during this period.

It's important to discuss and interpret the climate of fear that developed and resulted from this period – the destruction of the

infrastructure of a City. It's an important lesson that kids must learn.

Yes, for example the black business district that existed in the 50's on Wright and 9th Avenues no longer exists. There were thriving black business districts at one time.

I think we should consider linking this civil rights issue to the Japanese internment camp – there was one[actually, two] here in Arkansas.

We need to look at the international press and the international image of America. One effect of the '57 events: Louis Armstrong was an international ambassador – after Little Rock he refused to go on several assignments. This was noted around the world.

We need to contrast what was going on here, to international policies such as support of dictatorships abroad. We were pursuing democracy at home and fascism abroad.

Civil Rights Movement

The 1957-58 events at Central High School constituted one of many battles in the ongoing struggle for equal rights for all. The integration of Central High School was the first prominent implementation of the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court. Subsequent events have demonstrated that racial discrimination would not be obliterated quickly or easily.

The story includes all of the related civil right cases up to and including Brown v Board.

Julian Bond said, "The Little Rock Nine (LR9) became the poster children for the Civil Rights Movement." Prior to the entry of the LR9 into Central High School the only black image on TV was "Buckwheat" – so we were walking across the world.

When we interpret this subject it is important to also discuss the desegregation of other facilities – the sit-ins.

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It will also be important to include in the interpretation the local Civil Rights movements that sprung up after '57 – for example the “Black United Youth”.

It will also be important to focus on the role of the media – how it's influenced history and perceptions. What people do when the camera is trained on you and how people sometimes act differently.

Use of Executive Power

President Eisenhower's issuance of Executive Order 10730, which provided “Assistance for the Removal of an Obstruction of Justice within the state of Arkansas,” represented a national commitment to enforce civil rights. It was one of the few times that a president has exercised his right to use executive power to contravene state authority on behalf of civil rights for African-Americans.

We also need to discuss Eisenhower's power to contravene state authority.

Also people need to know that as a trained military professional – a general -- it really bugged Eisenhower that Faubus brought out the National Guard. We should also look at the impact the use of troops had later in Mississippi with JFK.

Perhaps a different viewpoint should be considered when discussing states' rights. Perhaps the battle was not states' rights, but rather one part of the constitution battling against the other. The constitution clearly gives states the responsibility for developing and administering their education systems, while the Federal Government has responsibility for civil rights. Perhaps the issue was civil rights versus education rights.

We need to explore the different spheres of influence. Executive power versus states' rights. Specifically: (1) What were the arguments? (2) How did they relate to the constitution? (3) How did they relate to the individuals involved?

Equal Rights

In the Declaration of Independence, the United States proclaimed as its founding philosophy a commitment to certain “self evident truths,”

including the assertion that “all men are created equal.” Almost 200 years later, and after several Constitutional amendments that strengthened and clarified that commitment, events at Little Rock Central High would put it to a monumental test.

Interpret how this story relates to the 14th amendment.

This topic should be presented in an interactive way.

We should explain how the interpretation of the 14th amendment has changed over time.

We need to remember that some groups were excluded by the constitution. We can't mislead young kids. They're sometimes horrified that this occurred – they never knew before.

Historically our young people need to know that duality and exclusivity has occurred in this country. And that the rights won by others before them, they will have to maintain – that's their responsibility.

The School

Central High is more than a building. It is a symbol of excellence in education, an architectural achievement, the end of a segregated school system, and humanity at its best and worst.

We need to define excellence – otherwise it will be hard to compare Central High today to the Central High of the past.

Central High was one of the top 38 schools in the country in '58. It is my impression that excellence in teaching brought it to that level in '58. It went down later, then came back up to that standard today.

We'll be presenting Central High today and its achievements.

It is important to show the excellence of education at Dunbar.

But you also have to look at the Black experience – frequently excellence was making out with less. So we need to be careful when we compare Dunbar to Central High.

Stories

Workshop participants suggested stories and made observations that overlapped interpretive theme boundaries.

Stories will grab their attention first – then transfer to the broader social issues.

We need to discuss choices made and their results.

The parents of the Little Rock 9 have been overlooked in telling this story. They are an under-recognized group; they put themselves at risk -- their incomes and their children.

Visitors should know that there was a dual school system.

This story relates to today – the school system is still under court supervision for implementing its integration plan.

We should look at the role the media played in this event; and the role of iconic images that dominated the reporting that may or may not have actually represented what was going on.

The goal of providing access to contemporary stories such as Central High School today and the current racial situation – how do we deal with those stories?

I have this fear that I'd like to share with you, something that is expressed to me frequently by black college kids, that really upsets me. They tell me that integration was one of the worst things that ever happened to blacks. This is something we must address. Do some sort of comparison of experiences and achievements from then to now

Yes, this thought is pervasive in the black community. Right now I'm reading an article "Has Brown Become Irrelevant?" Many social commentators have asked this question.

These feelings may not be about desegregation – but more about how it was done.

We must remember that still to this day people are going to court to reverse integration plans and decisions.

And it will be a long time before we discuss the quality of education received.

When and where do we address the quality of education received and class. It's not just race but economics as well.

We also need to explore the change in teacher attitudes.

We don't talk enough about class.

This could be a common issue across racial lines.

We need to address the role of the churches during this period.

How do we make this relevant to kids today? When I visit the school cafeteria I see white kids sitting at one table and blacks at another.

We need to explore the social impact of "white flight".

Central High is really two schools under one roof. You have your advanced placement kids – those who are heading for Ivy League schools, and every one else.

We need to remember that Little Rock Arkansas showed our underwear to everyone. But we represent what was going on everywhere else. We're not going to take all of the blame. We are a picture of what was going on elsewhere.

What happened in Boston in the 70's has the same systemic causes as what happened here.

We need to remember what happened inside of the school and what happened outside of the school were different. Although there were some very bad things that happened inside the school to the Little Rock Nine, these actions were not condoned by teachers or most students.

I remember a female student who helped one of the Little Rock Nine with her French lessons. Well that student's father was threatened

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with unemployment when his co-workers learned his daughter was helping.

We need to define desegregation versus integration. We're actually talking about desegregation. Integration implies good times – hanging out – this is not accurate here.

Suggestions for Interpretation and Education

Participants offered many suggestions relating to interpretation.

We've got to get their attention first. Grab their imagination, and introduce the social issues.

Kids -- even the youngest -- understand the issue of fairness. We have a wonderful opportunity to have kids of today think about how they would deal with the issues of '57. And there's a lot of historical text available to assist with this approach.

I believe the appropriate time frame for focus is the school class years of 1957 and 1958. Actually with the closure of school for a year we're also really talking about students affected in '59 and '60 too.

We need to do this in such a way that what happened in Little Rock ties to the national story of desegregation. And allow for individual growth and discovery – when did the schools desegregate where I'm from? What happened in my hometown? This may not be within someone's experience; we have to help people set this story in both a personal and national context.

I think we need to treat each school year separately. Frequently when interpreted they're lumped together and people get really confused, and events and their sequencing are lost. We need to treat each school year separately. So the choices made actually reflect the issues of the day and the personal experiences. When they're overlapped it's confusing and history gets mixed up.

The best you can do is make people think. You can't make them change their minds.

It is important for people to understand that Civil Rights did not happen in '59 – it's important to establish context and effect.

Visitor Experience

There were many suggestions for what visitors should be able to experience.

People should be able to visit Daisy Bates Home.

We need to bring the past forward to the present. There are healing things we need to do.

It's important to remember during the planning process that visitors and students need to see the real thing.

We've got the real thing. The school is still open and operating – that's incredibly important.

It's critical to provide somehow an opportunity to interact with current students – this is something very special about this park.

Visitors love meeting the kids. The audience wants to know what the school is like today – how does their school experience today compare with the visitor's school experience of the past. Visitors take special interest in what extracurricular activities the students are involved in -- what clubs they're part of. Visitors are also very interested in the racial make-up of the school today.

This would allow for some interesting contrasts. During '57 the LR9 were escorted in and out of the school for their safety; they went right home. The athletic teams were not integrated here.

We need to think about categories of visitors when planning for them. We'll have out-of-town guests, school groups, Civil Rights Historical Field Trips, NPS groupies, cross-country tours, regional and heritage tourism.